

Amendments to the Claims:

Please cancel claims 15, 16, 19, 20 and 27 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 - 13 (canceled)

14. (currently amended) A method for inspecting foreign matters in or on repeated micro-miniature patterns formed upon a surface of an object to be inspected, comprising following steps:

obtaining an object image by picking up the image of the micro-miniature pattern, under a bright field illumination, at a coordinate position on the surface of said object to be inspected, which is designated previously;

obtaining a reference image by picking up the image of the micro-miniature pattern, under a bright field illumination, at an another coordinate position on the surface of said object to be inspected, which is different from but corresponding to said coordinate position mentioned in the above step;

obtaining ~~an arithmetic processed image~~ at least one of (a) a difference image between said object image and said reference image and (b) a summation image of said object image and said reference image; and

deciding a presence of a foreign matter at the coordinate position on said object to be inspected, which is previously designated, on a basis of ~~a condition of said arithmetic processed image obtained in the above step~~ at least one of (a) a

difference between a distance between separate images of the foreign matter adjacent to each other and a width of said repeated micro-miniature patterns on the difference image, (b) the summation image being made on the micro-miniature pattern and the foreign matter to be compared to a predetermined threshold, and (c) colors of said different images adjacent to each other of the foreign matter.

Claim 15 (canceled)

Claim 16 (canceled)

17. (Original) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim 14, wherein the coordinate position on the surface of said object to be inspected which is designated previously, is a position of existing said foreign matter, which is defined by detecting a scattered light from the surface of the repeated micro-miniature pattern under a dark field when an inspection light is illuminated upon said object to be inspected from a light source.

18. (Original) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim 14, wherein on the surface of said object to be inspected are formed at least two or more of same patterns repeatedly, and the position of said reference image is equal to that of said object image to inspected on the coordinates on each of said at least two or more of patterns.

Claim 19 (canceled)

Claim 20 (canceled)

21. (previously presented) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim 14, further comprising a step for displaying a result of a decision made in the deciding step.

22. (currently amended) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim-~~15~~ 28, further comprising a step for displaying a result of a decision made in the deciding step.

23. (currently amended) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim-~~16~~ 29, further comprising a step for displaying a result of a decision made in the deciding step.

24. (currently amended) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim-~~17~~ 30, further comprising a step for displaying a result of a decision made in the deciding step.

25. (currently amended) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim-~~18~~ 31, further comprising a step for displaying a result of a decision made in the deciding step.

26. (currently amended) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim-~~19~~ 32, further comprising a step for displaying a result of a decision made in the deciding step.

Claim 27 (canceled)

28. (new) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim 14, further comprising a step of calculating a size of defect based on a summation of a normal length of difference images decided as a defect and a width of said repeated micro-miniature patterns.

29. (new) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim 14, further comprising a step in which a difference of length between a length of adjacent difference images is longer than a width of said repeated micro-miniature patterns for deciding a defect as a non-fatal defect, and in which a difference of length between a length of adjacent difference images is shorter than a width of said repeated micro-miniature patterns for deciding a defect as a fatal defect.

30. (new) A method for inspecting foreign matters as defined in claim 14, wherein the step of obtaining includes obtaining (a) difference image between said object and said reference image, and the step of deciding includes deciding the presence of a foreign matter at the coordinate position on said object to be inspected, which is previously designated, on the basis of (a) a difference between a distance between separate images of the foreign matter adjacent to each other and the width of said repeated micro-miniature patterns on the difference image.

31. (new) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim 14, wherein the step of obtaining includes obtaining (b) a summation image of said object image and said reference image, and the step of deciding a presence of a foreign matter at the coordinate position on said object to be inspected, which is

previously designated, is decided on the basis of (b) the summation image being made on the micro-miniature pattern and the foreign matter to be compared to a predetermined threshold.

32. (new) A method for inspecting foreign matters as defined in claim 14, wherein the step of obtaining includes obtaining (a) a difference image between said object image and said reference image, and the step of deciding a presence of a foreign matter at the coordinate position on said object to be inspected, which is previously designated, includes deciding on the basis of (c) colors of said different images adjacent to each other of the foreign matter.